

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 01671 221508Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 DPW-01 ORM-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 USIA-06 DODE-00 EB-08 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
L-03 H-01 /086 W
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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4138
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 1671

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, EEC, MY, VN, DA
SUBJECT: DANISH DELEGATION'S VISIT TO VIETNAM

REF CPENHAGEN 1206 AND 1620 (NOTAL)

1. ON MARCH 21, I MET WITH AMBASSADOR OLE BIERRING, MFA
DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS. BIERRING WAS A MEMBER OF THE
DANISH DELEGATION, LED BY MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO LISE
OSTERGAARD, WHICH RETURNED LAST WEEK FROM VIETNAM AND
MALAYSIA. DURING OUR 55-MINUTE MEETING, BIERRING GAVE
FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFO ON VIETNAM:

2. ECONOMIC AGREEMENT. BIERRING CONFIRMED THE REPORT
CONTAINED IN REFTEL 1620, WITH THE FOLLOWING MODICATIONS:

(A) THE DANISH-VIETNAMESE COMMISSION TO BE SET
UP IS A COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, INDUSTRIAL AND
TECHNICAL COOPERATION;

B) MINSTER OSTERGAARD DID NOT MENTION A DEFINITE
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PAGE 02 COPENH 01671 221508Z

LOAN FIGURE. SHE SAID ONLY THAT DENMARK WOULD BE
WILLIONG TO CONSIDER GRANTING FURTHER LOANS WHEN THE
150 MILLION KRONER LOAN ALREADY GIVEN HAS BEEN
EXHAUSTED.

3. ASEAN. BIERRING SAID THE DELEGATION SOUGHT TO LEARN
WHERE VIETNAM STANDS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SOUTHEAST

ASIAN COUNTRIES. VIETNAMESE SAID THEY WISH TO REMAIN NON-ALIGNED AND PREFER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES RATHER THAN ENTERING INTO A MULTILATERAL RELATIONSHIP SUCH AS ASEAN. THE VIETNAMESE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN IMPROVING THEIR RELATIONS WITH MOST COUNTRIES IN THE AREA, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THAILAND.

4. INCREASED TIES WITH WEST. BIERRING STATED THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE EAGER TO RE-ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY. VIETNAMESE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH A NEW INVESTMENT CODE THAT IS TO BE ENACTED AND APPLIED IN SOUTH VIETNAM. HE MENTIONED THAT PRIME MINISTER DONG WILL BE GOING TO PARIS IN EARLY SPRING OF THIS YEAR AND THAT DONG HAS ALSO APPROACHED OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NORDIC COUNTRIES, WHICH HE WISHES TO VISIT. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, BIERRING SAID PRIME MINISTER DONG WOULD BE WELCOME TO DENMARK IF VISITING OTHER NORDIC COUNTRIES, BUT THAT IT WAS A LITTLE TOO SOON AND DENMARK WOULD RATHER HAVE TIME FIRST TO WORK OUT THE AGREEMENTS RESULTING FROM THE DANISH DELEGATION'S TRIP.

5. ATMOSPHERE. BIERRING STATED THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE LOW-KEY WAY THE VIETNAMESE DISCUSSED THE WAR AND THE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT. "THEY MAKE OBLIQUE REFERENCES, BUT NOT STRIDENT COMMENTS." HE DESCRIBED THE VIETNAMESE AS "BOTH SELF-ASSURED AND OVERWHELMED": SELF-ASSURED BECAUSE OF THEIR ENOMOUS NATURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES; OVERWHELMED BECAUSE OF A PEACE WHICH CAME BEFORE THEY

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PAGE 03 COPENH 01671 221508Z

COULD PREPARE FOR IT. IN THIS CONNECTION, BIERRING NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE DEFENDED THE MAINTENANCE OF A ONE-MILLION MAN ARMY BECAUSE, IF DEMOBILIZED, MOST SOLDIERS WOULD JOIN THE RANKS OF THE UNEMPLOYED. HE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT REMAINED A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR HANOI.

6. CONCLUSION. BIERRING THOUGHT THAT THE NEW VIETNAMESE REGIME IS TAKING A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY. RECOGNIZING THAT THE WEST MUST PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE REBUILDING, THE REGIME IS OPENLY SEEKING CLOSER RELATIONS. THE ENORMITY OF THE JOB AHEAD ALLOWS NO TIME FOR LOOKING BACK WITH BITTERNESS, AND THE REGIME APPEARS WILLING TO DOWNPLAY PAST DIFFERENCES WITH THE INDIVIDUAL ASEAN COUNTRIES, THE U.S. AND SUPPORTERS OF THE FALLEN REGIME IN ORDER TO TACKLE THE TASKS AT HAND.

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